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(54) **ADAPTIVE CONFIGURATION FOR A FIREARM**

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USPC 42/71.01, 75.03, 75.1
See application file for complete search history.

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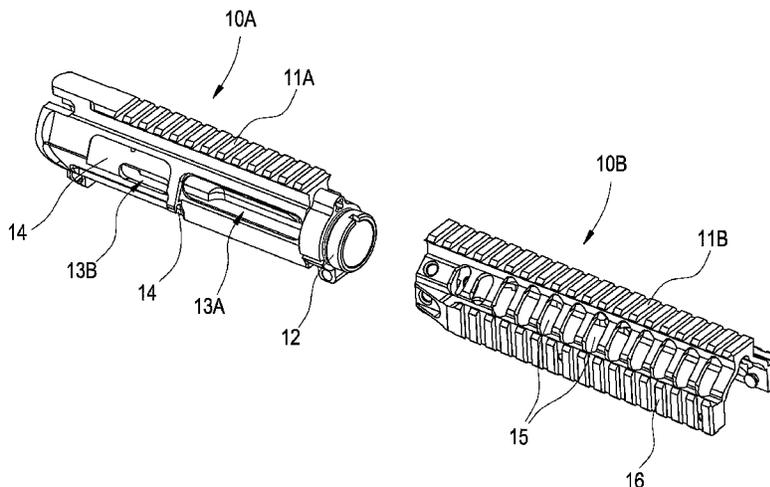
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A combination for a firearm which creates an improved firearm. An upper chassis is created which is formed from a first housing and a second housing which, once independently formed, are permanently secured to each other. The upper chassis provides a first opening through which a spent cartridge is discharged and a second opening which permits a variety of attachments to be selectively attached to the upper chassis to customize the firearm to the user and activity.

14 Claims, 3 Drawing Sheets



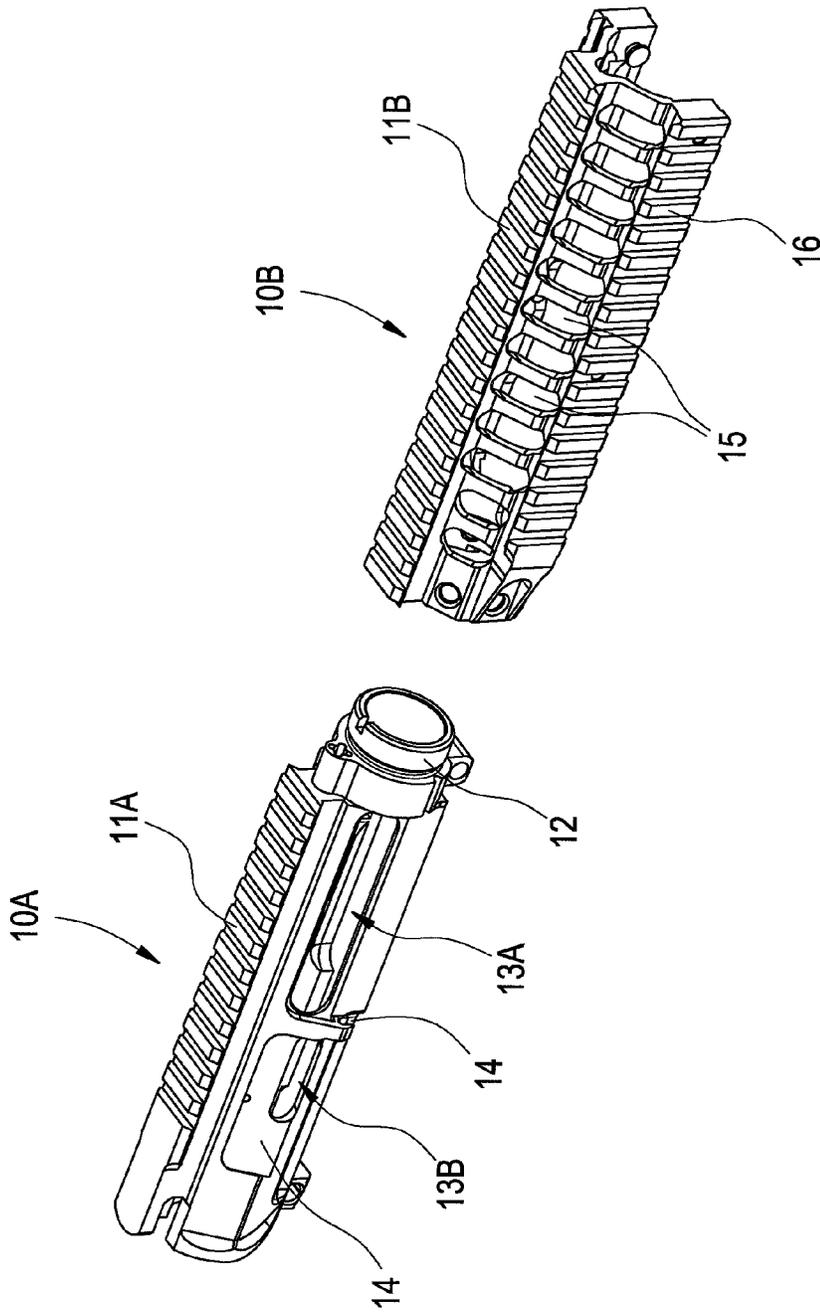


FIG. 1

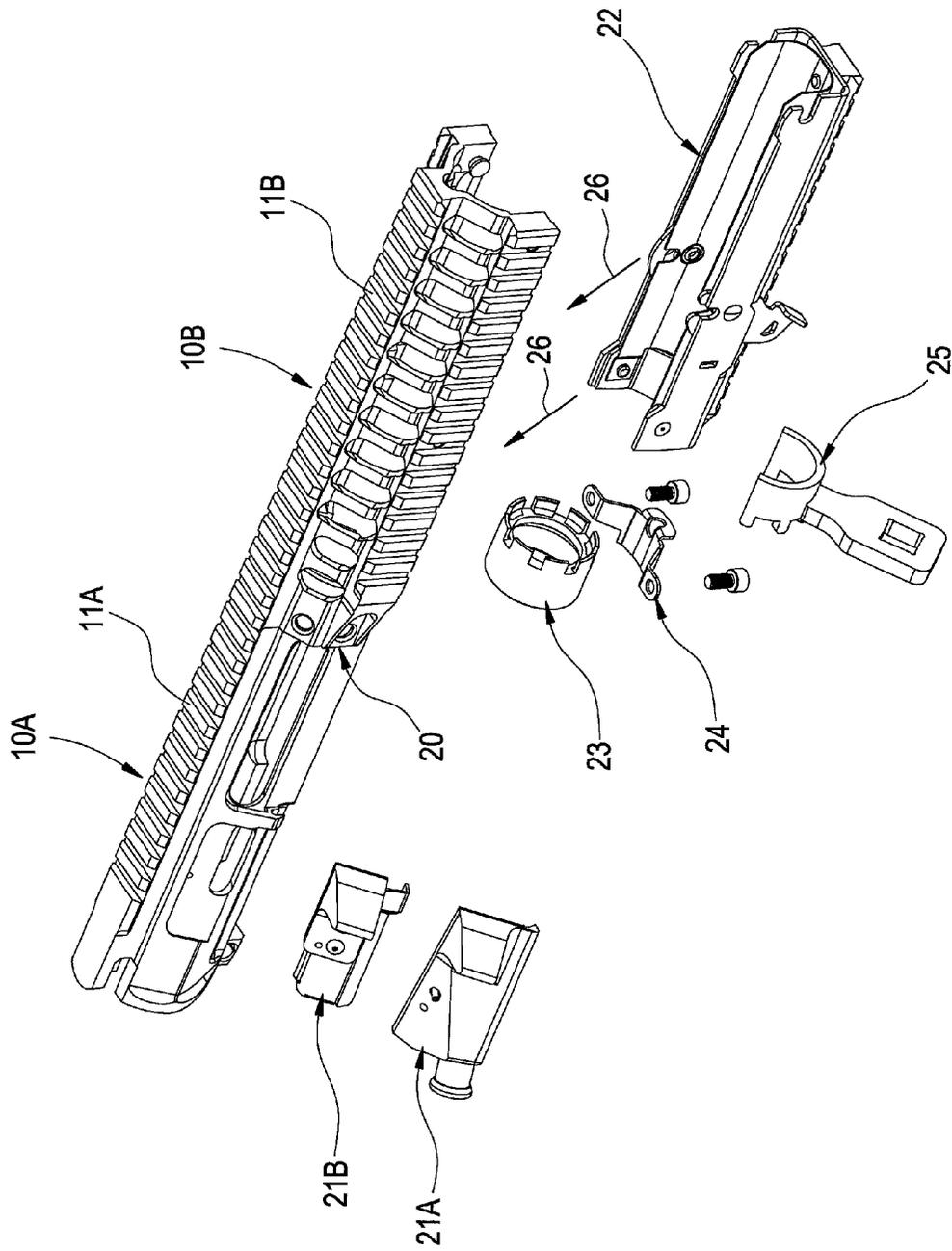


FIG. 2

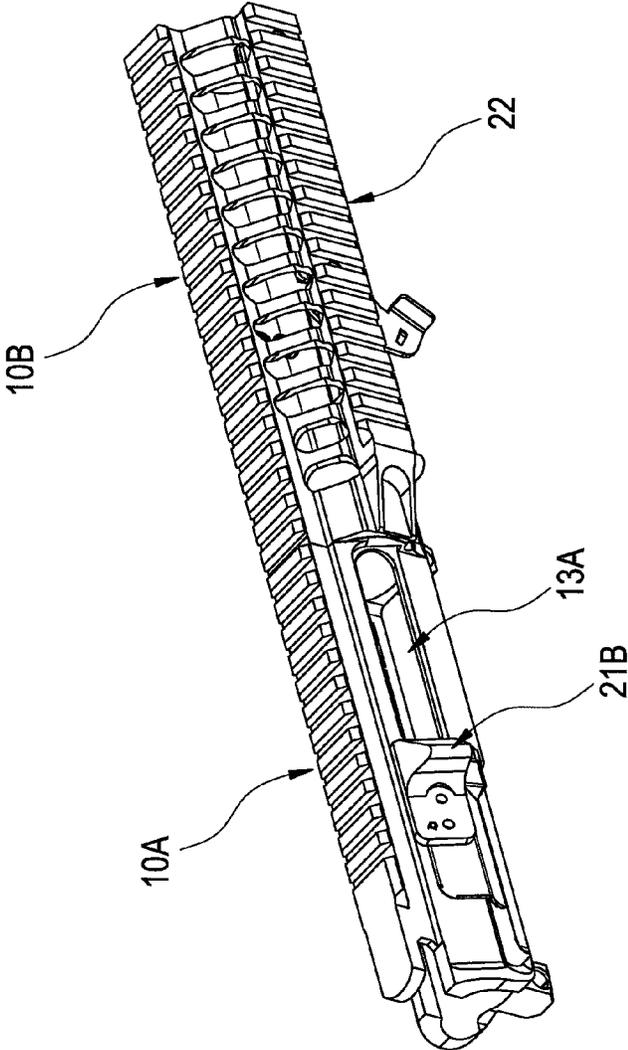


FIG. 3

ADAPTIVE CONFIGURATION FOR A FIREARM

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates generally to firearms and more particularly to attachments which tailor the firearm to particular uses.

The use of automatic and semi-automatic rifles is commonly known to be prevalent with military, law enforcement and security forces, as well as civilian collectors, sportsmen and competitive marksmen. One such prolific design is the family of rifles based on the U.S. Military M16 rifle, including the M4 carbine, the civilian AR15, and the larger AR10 and all improvements, modifications and variations of these. Any of these rifles can be further adapted for single shot action. Variations of these rifles are found in numerous military, commercial and experimental calibers.

While there are many conventional firearms that have an integral mounting rail and hand guard, the M16/AR15 family of rifles uses a distinctly separate mounting rail and hand guard assembly. The conventional mounting rail mounts by tabs to the lower receiver, the rifle's barrel mounts to the mounting rail and the conventional hand guards mount to the barrel. This arrangement places the hand guard mounted to the barrel and in contact with the rifle barrel, which is detrimental to accuracy. This method also does not provide for solid mounting or consistent positioning of peripheral devices mounted to the hand guard.

Earlier developments have provided improved hand guard systems that utilize replacement hand guard assemblies that attach by clamping, screwing or slipping over a standard or proprietary barrel nut, clamping to the front or rear sight mounting platforms, or both. These hand guard systems often include multiple rails for attachment of peripheral devices. More current developments have provided monolithic receiver and hand guard platforms, these efforts are manufactured from a solid, homogeneous piece of stock. This manufacturing technique requires the use of a proprietary barrel and does not allow for the use of standard M16/AR15 barrels.

It is clear from the foregoing that there is a need for a more versatile firearm.

REFERENCES

The following references relate to this technology: U.S. Pat. No. 2,447,091, entitled "Interchangeable Gun Barrel and Stock" issued to Pope on Aug. 17, 1948; U.S. Pat. No. 3,075,314, entitled, "Hand Guard for Rifles" issued to Bakker on Jan. 29, 1963; U.S. Pat. No. 3,090,150, entitled "Hand Guard Construction" issued to Stoner on May 21, 1963; U.S. Pat. No. 3,198,076, entitled "Convertible Gun" issued to Stoner on Aug. 3, 1965; U.S. Pat. No. 3,830,003, entitled "Floated Barrel Rifle with Metal Stock for Improved Barrel Action Bedding" issued to Clerke on Aug. 20, 1974; U.S. Pat. No. 4,536,982, entitled "Cylindrical Rifle Handguard Assembly" issued to Bredbury et al. On Aug. 27, 1985; U.S. Pat. No. 5,010,676, entitled "Hand Guard for Firearms" issued to Kennedy on Apr. 30, 1991; U.S. Pat. No. 4,765,224, entitled "Automatic Rifle Gas System" issued to Morris on Aug. 23, 1988; U.S. Pat. No. 5,155,284, entitled "Machine Guns Barrel Locking Mechanism" issued to Flashkes on Oct. 13, 1992; U.S. Pat. No. 5,198,600, entitled "Mount for Rifle" issued to E'Nama on Mar. 30, 1993; U.S. Pat. No. 5,305,539, entitled "Collapsible Firearm Device" issued to Von Kuster on Apr. 26, 1994; U.S. Pat. No.

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SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides a combination for a firearm which creates an improved firearm. When the combination is applied to a firearm, a highly improved firearm is created.

In general the present invention relates to a line of military rifles such as the M16/AR-15 which utilizes a chassis or housing to enclose the rifle's action mechanism as well as the barrel. Those of ordinary skill in the art readily recognize a variety of other firearms to which the present invention applies.

An upper chassis is created which is formed from a first housing and a second housing which, once formed in a preliminary state, are then permanently secured to each other.

The first housing is milled/stamped or otherwise formed to function as what is commonly recognized as the firearm

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receiver, housing all or part of the action mechanism. This housing has multiple openings that allow for the assembly and operation of the firearm, as well as attachments that interface with or enhance the operation of the action mechanism. The forward part of the housing features a port and threaded boss, which allow for the conventional mounting and attachment of the barrel assembly. Further, the first housing has an upper rail which is configured to accept peripheral devices such as illumination devices, ancillary sights, or other devices well known to those of ordinary skill in the art.

The second housing, also equipped with an upper rail, is secured by adhesive, welding or other methods to the first housing once the first housing has been created. By making the two housings separately and then joining them to form the upper chassis, manufacture of the threaded barrel mounting boss is facilitated.

Once the first and second housing are joined, in one embodiment of the invention, the rails of the first housing and the second housing go through an additional step wherein the two rails are "fine tuned" by a milling operation so that the two rails effectively become a single rail.

The upper chassis provides a first opening through which a spent cartridge is discharged and a second opening. It is the second opening which permits a variety of attachments to be secured to the upper chassis so that the firearm is customized even further for the particular use or the user of the firearm.

These peripherals which address the second opening are such items as a spent cartridge deflector or a manual bolt assist mechanism. Securing the peripherals is done through a variety of techniques such as a locking mechanism secured to the upper chassis/first housing, or by clamps which are secured to the peripheral itself.

When the above chassis is secured to the firearm, a firearm assembly is created which has a hand guard and rail platform. A third housing is secured to the second housing portion of the upper chassis to form a protective "tube" through which the barrel of the firearm extends. This tube (formed by the second housing and the third housing) does not contact the barrel and is equipped with vents to assist in cooling the barrel of the firearm.

The barrel of the firearm is positioned through the hand guard portion and secured to the receiver assembly by conventional mechanisms.

The assembly has a rail for the attachment of peripheral devices running continuously along the length of the upper surface. The hand guard portion optionally has additional rails for the attachment of further peripheral devices along each side.

In one embodiment of the invention, the third housing (sometimes referred to as the lower chassis) has at least one rail for the attachment of peripheral devices. The removable lower section has a heat chassis mounted therein.

Ideally this lower chassis is removable and replaced without the removal of fasteners and without the use of special tools.

The individual components are made using a variety of manufacturing techniques, including, but not limited to: forgings, casting, extrusions, or machined from solid stock and are made with a variety of materials including aluminum, steel, metal alloys, polymers and other materials obvious to those of ordinary skill in the art.

The components are permanently joined together during manufacture using conventional welding, brazing, friction "stir" welding, sonic welding, adhesives, locking pins or other appropriate methods for the materials used.

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The invention, together with various embodiments thereof, will be more fully explained by the accompanying drawings and the following descriptions thereof.

DRAWINGS IN BRIEF

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of the preferred embodiment of the first and second housing used to enclose the action mechanism and as a upper hand-guard respectively.

FIG. 2 is a perspective view of the preferred embodiment of the assembly showing the three housings as well as the preferred peripheral mechanisms and the barrel nut.

FIG. 3 is a perspective view of the assembled preferred embodiment.

DRAWINGS IN DETAIL

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of the preferred embodiment of the first and second housing used to enclose the action mechanism and as a upper hand-guard respectively.

The first housing 10A and the second housing 10B are ideally machined from solid stock and are made of aluminum. Other embodiments of the invention utilize forging, casting, or extrusion to form the housings. A variety of materials are also available such as steel, metal alloys, and polymers. Those of ordinary skill in the art readily recognize other manufacturing techniques and materials which can be used.

Within the first housing 10A, is a first opening 13A through which a spent cartridge from the action mechanism (not shown) will be discharged; and a second opening 13B. In this embodiment of the invention, grooves 14 are provided which accept the attachment of a peripheral attachment (not shown) which at least partially obscures the second opening 13B.

An upper rail 11A is configured on the first housing 10A. In the preferred embodiment of the invention, upper rail 11A is machined into a "rough" state at this stage of the production process.

Also on the first housing 10A is an integral threaded boss 12, which permits the conventional mounting and securing of a standard barrel, as recognized by those of ordinary skill in the art.

The second housing 10B, also has an upper rail 11B which is also machined into a "rough" state. Upper rail 11B is configured to align with upper rail 11a when the two housings, 10A and 10B, are secured to each other.

Vent holes 15 permit heat from the barrel, which will eventually be covered by housing 10B, to escape.

Secondary rail 16, (also mirrored on the opposite side), in this embodiment, is used to attach peripheral devices such as flashlights and additional sights.

FIG. 2 is a perspective view of the preferred embodiment of the assembly showing the three housings as well as the preferred peripheral mechanisms and the barrel nut.

As illustrated, first housing 10A has been secured to the second housing 10B so as to form a composite unit, with upper rail 11A and upper rail 11B aligned to each other. In this embodiment, the two housing are joined using conventional welding at their intersection 20. Brazing, friction "stir" welding, sonic welding, adhesives, and locking pins are also acceptable for this bonding of the two housings.

Once the housings have been secured to each other the upper rail 11A and upper rail 11B are aligned. In this embodiment, upper rail 11A and upper rail 11B are now machined into a final or finished structure, thereby producing a unified upper rail.

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Through the use of barrel nut **23**, mating the threaded barrel boss (not visible in this illustration), the unified first housing **10A** and the second housing **10B** once connected to the action mechanism, provide a mechanism to secure the barrel to the action mechanism. Barrel nut **23** is tightened using tool **25**.

Once the unified upper housing is secured to the firearm, third housing **22** is secured to the bottom of the second housing **10B** as illustrated by arrows **26**. The connection of the third housing **22** with the second housing **10B**, provides a total encasement of the firearm's barrel (not shown) without making contact with the barrel, thereby providing a hand-guard for the firearm.

Additionally a grenade launcher bracket **24** is also optionally attached to the assembly.

Attachments such as cartridge deflection plate **21B** and bolt assist mechanism **21A** are securable to the first housing **10A** as outlined earlier. In this manner, the firearm is easily tailored to the specific needs of the user.

FIG. **3** is a perspective view of the assembled preferred embodiment. For ease of illustration, the firearm is not illustrated.

The three housings, composite assembly **10A/10B** and **22** have now been secured to each other and the assembly provides, as illustrated deflector **21B** which re-directs the spent cartridges as they are ejected through opening **13B**. The combination of the second housing **10B** and the third housing **22** provides a vented hand-guard which surrounds the barrel of the firearm without making contact with the barrel.

It is the barrel nut and threaded barrel boss (not visible) that allows the barrel to be secured to the composite chassis; and it is through the creation of the threaded barrel boss during manufacture of the first housing prior to the bonding of the first and second housing, which allows the threaded barrel boss to be easily and properly created.

It is clear that the present invention provides for a highly improved chassis for a firearm as well an improved firearm employing the chassis.

What is claimed is:

1. A firearm having a barrel, an action mechanism, and means for discharging a spent cartridge from said barrel, said firearm comprising:

- a) A first housing having,
 - 1) a first opening through which the spent cartridge is discharged,
 - 2) an mounting rail, and,
 - 3) a threaded member positioned to secure the barrel to the first housing; and,
- b) a second housing having a mounting rail, and wherein said second housing is secured to said first housing such that the mounting rail of said first housing is longitudinally aligned with the mounting rails of said second housing.

2. The firearm according to claim **1**, further including a third housing securable to the second housing such that, when secured to each other, said second housing and said third housing form a channel.

3. The firearm according to claim **2**, wherein the mounting rail of said first housing and the mounting rail of the second housing are machined to form a single continuous mounting rail.

4. The firearm according to claim **3**, further including a threaded nut adapted to selectively secure the first housing to the action mechanism via said threaded member.

5. The firearm according to claim **4**, wherein when said first housing is secured to the action mechanism and said

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barrel is secured to said action mechanism via said threaded member as the threaded nut, said second housing and said third housing encircle said barrel without contacting the barrel.

6. A chassis for a firearm having a barrel and an action mechanism, said chassis comprising:

- a) a first housing having,
 - 1) a first opening through which a spent cartridge is discharged from said action mechanism when said first housing is secured to said firearm, and,
 - 2) a second opening accessing the action mechanism when said first housing is secure to said firearm; and,
- b) an attachment securable to the first housing such that said attachment at least partially obscures said second opening when said attachment is secured to said first housing.

7. The chassis according to claim **6**, wherein said attachment includes a deflection plate positioned to deflect the spent cartridge exiting from said first opening in said housing.

8. The chassis according to claim **6**, wherein said attachment includes a manually operable bolt mechanism selectively engaging said action mechanism.

9. The chassis according to claim **8**, wherein said first housing further includes:

- a) an mounting rail; and,
- b) a threaded member positioned to secure the barrel to said action mechanism when said first housing is secured to the action mechanism.

10. The chassis according to claim **9**, further including:

- a) a second housing having an mounting rail, and wherein said second housing is permanently secured to said first housing such that the mounting rail of said first housing is longitudinally aligned with the mounting rail of said second housing; and,
- b) a third housing securable to the second housing such that, when secured to each other, said second housing and said third housing form a channel through which the barrel of said firearm passes.

11. The chassis according to claim **10**, wherein the mounting rails of said first housing and the mounting rail of said second housing are machined to form a single continuous mounting rail.

12. A combination for a firearm having a barrel, an action mechanism, and means for discharging a spent cartridge from said barrel, said combination comprising:

- a) an upper chassis comprising,
 - 1) a first housing having,
 - A) a first opening through which said spent cartridge is discharged,
 - B) a second opening accessing the action mechanism contained within said first housing,
 - C) a locking mechanism located on an exterior portion of said housing positioned proximate to the second opening
 - D) an mounting rail, and,
 - E) a threaded member positioned to secure said first housing to said action mechanism, and,
 - 2) a second housing having an mounting rail, and permanently secured to said first housing such that the mounting rail of said first housing is longitudinally aligned with the mounting rail of said second housing;
- b) a lower chassis selectively securable to the second housing of said upper chassis such that when secured to

each other, said lower chassis and the upper chassis provide a channel through which a barrel of said firearm extends;

- c) a first attachment securable to said first housing over said second opening and being a manually operable bolt mechanism for selectively engaging said action mechanism; and, 5
- d) a second attachment securable to said first housing over said second opening and being a deflection plate positioned to deflect a spent cartridge exiting from said first opening in said housing. 10

13. The combination according to claim **12**, wherein the mounting rails of said first housing and the mounting rail of said second housing are milled to form a single continuous upper housing. 15

14. The combination according to claim **13**, wherein said first housing includes a threaded member configured to secure the barrel to the action mechanism.

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